

Seeking Knowledge and One's Intentions

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In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Shaykh Salih bin `Abdul-`Aziz bin Muhammad Aal ash-Shaikh

'All praise is due to Allaah, as He deserves, and I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, may His honor be exalted, and I bear witness that Muhammed is His slave and messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and upon his family and companions and whosoever follows in his footsteps till the last day.

I ask Allah Al-Kareem by His most beautiful names and most lofty attributes to make me and all of you of those who are motivated for Allah, and do actions for Allaah, and seek knowledge for Allah's sake, and speaks for Allah's sake and does deeds fo Allah's sake , Jalla jalalahu, for indeed ACTIONS ARE BY INTENTIONS AND EVERY MAN SHALL HAVE BUT THAT WHICH HE INTENDED.

There is no doubt that seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim, as has been authentically reported from Al-Mustafa. Seeking knowledge has its principles and its stages; so whoever fails to acquire or seek knowledge based on these principles and on this gradation of talab al-'ilm (seeking knowledge) such will fail to acquire it. And this is an issue we repeatedly emphasize hoping to drive this into the hearts of the students of knowledge and those who love knowledge, and that is to acquire knowledge piecemeal, bit by bit , over the passage of time. As was said by the famous scholar Ibn Shihab Az-Zuhri, "Whoever aims to acquire knowledge all at once, it will leave him all at once. Rather knowledge should be acquired over the passage of days and nights"

Just as when a child is taught the basics of writing and the basics of speaking and articulating, he has to be taught this gradually, bit by bit, so if he continues to do this, he improves till he is eventually able to write and speak well. Knowledge, likewise has its young and its old, depending on the amount of understanding and their actions; and considering that knowledge is from Allah and His rasool (salla Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam) , there isn't anything in this 'ilm that is simple.

Malik, rahimahullah, when it was said to him that this is from the simple part of knowledge replied: There is nothing easy in the knowledge of the Quraan and the Sunnah. Rather it is as Allaah has said: "Verily we shall send down to you a weighty word."

So one who considers knowledge to be weighty and difficult will obtain it. But as for one who takes issues up saying: this is clear, and this is straightforward..., such a person will just pass over it rapidly and in doing so will lose out on a lot. Therefore, it is imperative to take things step by step in the acquisition of knowledge with the idea that nothing in it is simple - rather that all of it is weighty, with regards to its understanding, with regards to consolidating what is known, and with regards to persevering in acquiring knowledge; for it is weighty and it requires continuance and following up - for knowledge is forgotten if it is left, but if a taalib ul-ilm perseveres in it and continues, it will remain. So this emphasizes persistence on the part of the student of knowledge, so as not to be neglectful in the talab ul-ilm.

So let not one say, for example,"this book is simple, why is this text being explained since it is so simple and clear- they are known ahadeeth....". Such a person has come from this angle to wrongly simplify the complexities and principles of knowledge. A group from among the people of knowledge have said:"'Ilm comprises intricate knots ('Uqad) and Mulahh- so whoever is able to deal with the knots, 'Ilm becomes easy for him, and whoever fails to undo the knots, fails to acquire knowledge." And this will only occur by the perfection of the foundations - the usool - of the sciences. So if a seeker of knowledge perfects the known texts in hadeeth and the different fields of knowledge, he will then be prepared to proceed to a higher level, after having consolidated and understood what has preceded.

For this reason I strongly urge all the brothers and all the students of knowledge who hear what I say to approach knowledge and to take it with resolve and firmness, and to not take every issue and say this is simple, that is clear....Rather he should repeat that which is clear to make it clearer; repeat the knowledge he has so he can increase in his knowledge of what he knows, and so on.

And I ask Allah to make this explanation that is before us a complete and comprehensive one, and may it benefit the presenter and the listeners, and make us of those who have insight in it, of those

who speak from knowledge, not out of opinions and whims.'

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